

8 Steps to Conflict Resolution

1. **Cool down.** Don't try to resolve a conflict when you're angry (or the other person is angry). Take a time-out or agree to meet again in 24 hours.
2. **Describe the conflict.** Each person should tell about it in his or her own words. No put-downs allowed! *Important:* Although each person may have a different view of the conflict and use different words to describe it, neither account is "right" or "wrong."
3. **Describe what caused the conflict.** What specific events led up to the conflict? What happened first? Next? Did the conflict start out as a minor disagreement or difference of opinion? What happened to turn it into a conflict? *Important:* Don't label the conflict either person's "fault."
4. **Describe the feelings raised by the conflict.** Again, each person should use his or her own words. Honesty is important. No blaming allowed!
5. **Listen carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking.** Try to understand his or her point of view. Don't interrupt. It might help to "reflect" the other person's perceptions and feelings by repeating them back. *Examples:* "You didn't like it when I called you a name." "Your feelings are hurt." "You thought you should have first choice about what game to play at recess." "You're sad because you feel left out."
6. **Brainstorming solutions to the conflict.** Follow the three basic rules of brainstorming:
 - Everyone tries to come up with as many ideas as they can.
 - All ideas are okay.
 - Nobody makes fun of anyone else's ideas.

Be creative. Affirm each other's ideas. Be open to new ideas. Make a list of brain-stormed ideas so you're sure to remember them all. Then choose one solution to try. Be willing to negotiate and compromise.
7. **Try your solution.** See how it works. Give it your best efforts. Be patient.
8. **If one solution doesn't get results, try another.** Keep trying. Brainstorm more solutions if you need to.

If you can't resolve the conflict no matter how hard you try, agree to disagree. Sometimes that's the best you can do. Meanwhile, realize that the conflict doesn't have to end your relationship. People can get along even when they disagree.